

REMARKS

The disclosure objections and claim objections noted by the Examiner have been cured by the enclosed amendments correcting minor typographical errors.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 10, 11, 16, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as anticipated by Daley. Claims 3-6 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Daley further in view of Raschbichler. Claims 7 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Daley further in view of Applicant's admitted prior art. Claims 8 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Daley further in view of Raschbichler and Asao. Claims 12-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Daley further in view of Raschbichler.

Claim 1 readily distinguishes over Daley. Daley is not relevant. Claim 1 will be briefly explained first. From this explanation it can be easily seen why Daley is not relevant.

Although reference will be made to the preferred embodiment of Fig. 2, it should be understood that in reading claim 1 onto the preferred embodiment that there is no intention to limit claim 1 to the preferred embodiment of Fig. 2 only.

Claim 1 first recites providing a main slot punch, a separator punch, and a part feature. In the particular embodiment of Fig. 2, these are seen at 19, 22, and 28 respectively.

Claim 1 then recites that with the main slot and separator punches 19 and 22 are activated but with part feature punch 20 deactivated, the strip is fed in a first step distance. In Fig. 2, this step distance would be 23. Just after the fourth slot from the right side in Fig. 2 is punched, it is now time to punch the first part feature 15. As claim 1 recites, slot punch 19 and separator punch 22 are now deactivated and the

part feature punch 20a is now activated and the strip is advanced a second step distance which is different than the first step distance. In Fig. 2, this second step distance would be the distance between the center of the fourth slot and the center of the part feature 15, here a small step distance compared to the much larger step distance 23. After the part feature 15 is punched, claim 1 then recites that the part feature punch 20a is deactivated and the slot punch 19 and separator punch 22 are reactivated and the strip is fed a third step distance equal to a difference between the first step distance and the second step distance. That of course would be the distance from the center of the part feature 15 just punched out and the center of the fifth slot from the right.

Daley discloses nothing like this. In Fig. 4 of Daley, the punch pin 40 would be analogous to the part feature punch in Applicant's Fig. 2. Punch 39 would be analogous to the slot punch. However, in Fig. 4 of Daley, punches 39 and 40 are fixed to the die 18 and cannot be deactivated when the die closes. Thus, for this reason Daley is irrelevant.

Next, the feed steps for the lamination shown in Fig. 7 of Daley is constant and doesn't change. There is no second step different than a first step and no third step equal to the difference between the first and second steps. Although the Examiner cited Daley column 4, lines 132-136 and column 6, lines 136-150, these references only teach severing the strip longitudinally – in other words, the provision of some kind of a separation punch, but there is no disclosure of deactivating the slot punch and the separation punch during the second step movement of the lamination with the part feature punch activated. There is of course also no disclosure of advancing the strip with the part feature punch deactivated by a step distance equal to the difference between the first step distance and the second step distance.


The other secondary references cited by the Examiner also did not suggest the missing features in Daley. For example, Raschbichler nowhere discloses the activation and deactivation of the part feature punch cited in claim 1 nor does he disclose the step 1, step 2, and step 3 strip advancements of claim 1 with the part feature punch being deactivated for the step 1 advancement, activated for the step 2 advancement, and deactivated for the step 3 advancement.

Dependent claims 2-15 distinguish at least for the reasons noted in claim 1 and also by reciting additional method steps not suggested in combination.

Independent method claims 16, 17 and 18 distinguish in a manner similar to claim 1 since they recite many of the features recited in claim 1 such as deactivating the slot punch and activating the part feature punch and feeding the strip with the second step distance different than the slot first step distance.

Allowance of the case is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Brett A. Valiquet (Reg.No.27,841)
Schiff Hardin LLP
Patent Department
6600 Sears Tower
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: (312) 258-5786
Attorneys for Applicants.
CUSTOMER NO. 26574

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on April 28, 2005.



BRETT A. VALIQUET